

Projects Eligible for Funding in FY 2009 under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

The President's Budget for FY 2009 requested \$15 million for land conservation projects under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). This report presents the prioritized list of competitively-selected projects under the CELCP that are considered ready and eligible for funding in FY 2009. NOAA will use this list as a guide in selecting projects for funding within the amounts appropriated, after confirming that projects are still viable. This report also describes NOAA's process and criteria used to develop the list.

Background on CELCP & the Competitive Selection of Projects

The Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002, directed the Secretary to establish the CELCP for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses. The CELCP was also directed to give priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected, and that have significant ecological value.

In 2003, NOAA published guidelines for the program that outlined criteria for grant awards and a competitive process to distribute funds. The CELCP Guidelines ensure that lands or conservation easements acquired through CELCP provide long-term protection, serve a public benefit, and will be managed to protect the important ecological, conservation, recreational, historical, and aesthetic values for which they were acquired.

Since 2002, NOAA has awarded more than \$200 million to state and local governments in 27 of the 34 eligible coastal states and territories. CELCP funds have supported the protection of more than 40,000 acres through projects that have closed, and the number of acres continues to grow as more projects come to completion.

Based on Congressional direction, in FY 2006, NOAA conducted the first national competitive process to develop a list of projects considered ready and eligible for funding in FY 2007. A similar list was developed for FY 2008 funding.

Additional information about the CELCP can be found on NOAA's website at:
<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/>

Developing the FY 2009 Priority List

In May 2008, NOAA published a Federal Register Notice announcing a funding opportunity and requesting proposals for projects ready and eligible for funding in FY 2009. A full Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) notice and application materials were also posted on Grants.gov and the CELCP website. As outlined in the funding notice, each eligible coastal state was permitted to submit up to three projects addressing priorities identified within the state or territorial CELCP plans. NOAA received 54 proposals by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. EST, July

23, 2008. As described in the funding notice, NOAA generated a prioritized list of projects considered ready and eligible for funding. Funding for projects on the list is contingent upon the availability of FY 2009 Federal appropriations.

NOAA staff reviewed each project for eligibility and completeness. Three merit reviewers evaluated each project proposal according to criteria described in the funding notice. Criteria included: importance and/or relevance of proposed project to program goals, technical merit, qualifications of applicants, and project costs.

Program purpose (up to 55 points): Projects were evaluated for their importance or relevance to program goals, including ecological, conservation, recreational, aesthetic, historical/cultural values, and public benefits gained from the long-term protection and management of the property. Priority was given to projects that protect lands with significant ecological value.

Technical merit (up to 25 points): Projects were evaluated for their technical merit, including: whether a project could be effectively managed and protected over the long-term; the degree of threat of conversion from a natural or recreational state to other uses; and whether the project could be executed within the performance period.

Qualifications of applicants (up to 10 points): Projects were evaluated according to the capacity (such as staffing, resources, authority, and expertise) and experience of the applicant to execute the land transaction consistently with CELCP guidelines and to manage (either directly or through partnerships) property for long-term conservation of the values for which it is being protected.

Project costs (up to 20 points): The proposed budget for each project was evaluated to determine whether: land acquisition costs are reasonable and based on an independent appraisal or other assessment of fair market value; the source of the required non-Federal matching share of funds is consistent with CELCP guidelines and is likely to be available within the performance period; and direct and indirect costs for implementation of the project, if requested, are reasonable and consistent with CELCP guidelines.

Program staff ranked eligible projects in priority order based on the averaged scores of the three merit reviewers. Projects receiving tie scores were further evaluated according to the following selection factors, which were listed in the funding notice: program objectives and priorities (as set forth in section 1A and 1B of the FFO notice), including priority consideration for lands with significant ecological value and that can be effectively managed and protected; geographic distribution of projects and/or funds; and the applicant's prior CELCP award performance (if applicable).

The following list identifies, in ranked order, projects considered to be ready and eligible for funding in FY 2009. Partial funding was recommended for several projects, as indicated on the table below. Remaining projects were determined not to be ready or eligible based on requirements described in the FFO notice, such as eligibility of proposed costs, feasibility of completing the project within the performance period, or proposed long-term uses of the site(s).

For any projects selected for funding within amounts appropriated for FY 2009, applicants will need to submit additional documentation either at the time of final grant application, or as a condition of a grant award. This documentation includes: an appraisal that meets Federal appraisal standards to support the requested funding amount, evidence of title, and survey plat map. Documentation is required for each property that will be acquired with CELCP funds or that will contribute toward the non-Federal cost share. Documents will be used to substantiate cost estimates contained in project proposals and ensure the clear transfer of title or proper recordation of conservation easements to the grant recipient. These requirements are further described in section 4.4 of the CELCP Guidelines.

If funding is appropriated for CELCP in FY 2009, NOAA would expect to award grants between May and October 2009. NOAA recognizes that some projects may cease to be viable before a grant is awarded. NOAA will confirm the status of projects prior to making a final selection for funding. NOAA also recognizes that projects selected for funding may fall through prior to completion, even after a grant award has been made. To address this possibility, NOAA will maintain a contingency list of projects that were not able to be funded with available appropriations. NOAA will select replacement projects from this list in the event that a selected project cannot be completed and if funds are returned to the program.

FY 2009 Prioritized List for the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

Rank	State	Project Name	Eligible Funding #
1	VA	Crow's Nest - Phase 2	\$ 3,000,000
2	PR	San Miguel Natural Reserve Phase 2 Acquisition	\$ 3,000,000 *#
3	MA	Great Neck Conservation Partnership	\$ 2,073,500^
4	FL	Cayo Costa State Park	\$ 155,000 #
5	ME	Merrymeeting Bay Project	\$ 344,642 ^
6	NY	Peconic Estuary / Reeves Bay, Phase 2	\$ 1,213,250 *
7	WA	Kiket Island Phase 1 Acquisition: Deception Pass	\$ 3,000,000
8	OR	Big Creek Coastal Conservation Land Acquisition	\$ 2,000,000
9	VA	Blackwater River Old Growth Forest	\$ 600,000 *#
10	WA	Dutcher Cove Sewell Acquisition	\$ 520,000 *#
11	ME	Scarborough Marsh WMA	\$ 350,000
12	WI	Mashek Creek Conservancy	\$ 398,000
13	GA	Fort Frederica North Marsh Project	\$ 2,312,500 *#
14	NC	Eagles Island NC, Blue Sky Tract	\$ 250,500 ^
15	AK	Mulchatna River / Keefer Creek Acquisition	\$ 67,100
16	LA	Lake Ponchartrain Tchefuncte River Marshes	\$ 433,470 ^
17	FL	Indian River Lagoon Blueway	\$ 3,000,000
18	WA	John's Creek Estuary Acquisition	\$ 2,000,000 *
19	NH	Pawtuckaway River Corridor	\$ 1,060,000 ^
20	MS	Cat Island Land Acquisition	\$ 3,000,000 *
21	VA	Southern Tip Partnership-Nottingham Tract	\$ 415,000 ^

22	CT	Barn Island WMA Expansion	\$ 1,040,000
23	OR	Beaver Creek Natural Area Partnership Phase 2	\$ 3,000,000
24	CA	Paradise Beach Land Acquisition Project	\$ 1,900,000
25	WI	Houghton Falls Natural Area	\$ 1,319,400
26	GA	Altamaha River Murff Tract	\$ 2,500,000
27	HI	Lapakahi Marine Life Conservation District Acquisition, North Kohala, Hawaii Island	\$ 1,250,000 *
28	FL	Guana Tolomato Matanzas NERR -- Rogers Parcel	\$ 2,000,000
29	MD	Patuxent River Park Addition	\$ 1,000,000 *
30	NJ	MPS Landholders LLC / Durham / Tuckahoe WMA	\$ 2,000,000
31	CA	San Pablo Creek Marsh Property	\$ 460,000
32	WI	Seminary Woods	\$ 1,424,500
33	CT	Long Island Sound Coastal Forest Preserve	\$ 3,000,000 *
34	ME	Pond Cove Island Acquisition	\$ 637,500
35	NH	Coldrain Pond and Moose Mountains Core Areas	\$ 1,075,000 *^
36	CA	Santa Clara River Coast and Estuary Conservation Project	\$ 3,000,000
37	GA	Richmond Hill Wetlands Park Expansion	\$ 266,100
38	MI	Traverse City State Park - Mitchell Creek Land Additions	\$ 3,000,000 *
39	OH	Vermilion River Lakeshore Preserve	\$ 910,000 ^
40	OH	Middle Bass Island Wildlife Area	\$ 900,000
41	MD	Sellman Property at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary	\$ 118,250
42	TX	Cypress Creek Acquisition	\$ 633,500 ^
43	MD	Krause Property at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary	\$ 225,000
44	RI	Sakonnet Shoreline, Almy Tract	\$ 1,400,000
45	NJ	Waackaack Creek Meadows - McNamee	\$ 600,000
46	NJ	McKenna, Fairfield Township, Cumberland County	\$ 150,000

NOTE: 5% of the total enacted will be used for Program Administration

Notes:

* Signifies projects that will require negotiation or clarification of some elements with applicant, particularly regarding proposed project costs or uses of property. For example, project proposes to retain pre-existing uses on an interim basis or proposes limited harvest of timber for the purposes of restoration of a native coastal forest mix, habitat enhancement, or comparable reasons. NOAA reserves the right to review any easement, lease or management strategy for consistency with CELCP guidelines. NOAA also reserves the right to review all costs at the time of final grant application to determine eligibility and reasonableness and request budget changes accordingly, if needed.

^ Signifies projects that have been recommended for the list at a reduced funding level from the requested amount due to ineligibility of certain costs, proposed uses on portions of the project site(s), and/or insufficient information to determine the eligibility of proposed Federal costs or expenses to be used as match. In some cases, the project includes proposed costs that are not eligible, but that did not result in a reduction of the requested Federal share (such as match properties if greater than 1:1 match was included in the proposal).

Signifies that the costs for purchase of lands or easements, or the value of in-kind properties or donated land value proposed as match, must be documented through appraisals that meet Federal "Yellow Book" appraisal standards.